

REMARKS**Summary of the Office Action**

In the Office Action, claims 4 and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim subject matter which the Applicants regard as the invention.

Claims 1-2, 7-12, 24, and 31-36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Document No. 10279169A as interpreted in light of equivalent U.S. Patent Nos. 5,895,036 and 6,120,020 both to *Asao*.

Claims 1-2, 7-12, 16-18, 24, 31-36, and 38-39 stand further rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese 10279169 and the two U.S. Patents to *Asao*.

Claims 3, 5-6, 13-15, 19-23, 25-27, 29-30 and 37 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 4 and 28 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the § 112, second paragraph, rejections set forth in the Office Action and to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Summary of the Response to the Office Action

Applicants amend claims 4 and 28 to better delineate the meaning of high coefficient of friction without changing the scope of the claims. Applicants add the features of objected claim 2 and 3 into independent claim 1 and subsequently cancel claims 2-3 without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants rewrite claims 13, 15, 22, 25, and 27 into independent form as suggested in the Office Action. Applicants also add the features of objected claim 37 into independent

claim 32 and subsequently cancel claim 37 without prejudice or disclaimer. Further, Applicants amend claims 4, 6, and 31 for changes in dependency caused by the amendment to independent claim 1. Accordingly, claims 1, 4-36, and 38-39 are pending for further consideration.

All Claims are Allowable

Claims 4 and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim subject matter which the Applicants regard as the invention. The Examiner is thanked for the helpful suggestions for amending these claims so as to overcome any alleged indefiniteness. These suggestions have been incorporated into claims 4 and 28.

It is respectfully submitted that claims 4 and 28, as amended, are in compliance with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully submit that the objected to claims 13, 15, 22, 25, and 27 are allowable because they have been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims as suggested by the Examiner. Additionally, claims 14, 19-21, and 23, which depend from newly amended independent claim 13 and claims 26 and 29-30, which depend from newly amended independent claims 25 and 27, respectively, are allowable at least because their base claims are allowable, as well as for the additional features recited therein. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection to above-mentioned claims.

Further, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 28 is allowable at least because newly amended independent claim 27 is allowable. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection to claim 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

All Subject Matter Complies With 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and § 103(a)

Claims 1-2, 7-12, 16-18, 24, 31-36 and 38-39 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and § 103(a) as being anticipated or unpatentable by Japanese Document No. 10279169A as interpreted in light of equivalent U.S. Patent Nos. 5,895,036 and 6,120,020 both to *Asao*. These rejections are respectfully traversed in view of the amendments to the claims, as well as the following comments.

Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 4-12, 16-18, 24, 31-36 and 38-39 are allowable at least because independent claims 1 and 32 have been amended to include allowable subject matter from dependent claims 2-3 and 37, respectively. As such, newly amended independent claims 1 and 32 contain the exact same allowable subject matter as the objected to claims 3 and 37. In light of the amendment to independent claims 1 and 32, claims 2-3 and 37 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

In view of the above arguments, Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendment to claims 1 and 32, and that the rejection of independent claims 1 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and § 103 be withdrawn. Additionally, claims 4-12, 16-18, 24, 31, 33-36, and 38-39, which depend from independent claims 1 and 32, are allowable at least because their base claims are allowable, as well as for the additional features recited therein.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and the timely allowance of the pending claims. Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of the response, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative to expedite prosecution.

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0310. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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MJB/DEC